

105TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 249

Stating the sense of Congress that substantial amounts of the proceeds received by the United States under any congressionally approved tobacco settlement should be allocated to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 24, 1998

Mr. EVANS (for himself, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. KENNEDY of Massachusetts, Mr. FILNER, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. MASCARA, Mr. PETERSON, Mr. REYES, and Mr. RODRIGUEZ) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Stating the sense of Congress that substantial amounts of the proceeds received by the United States under any congressionally approved tobacco settlement should be allocated to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Whereas the United States has both directly and indirectly facilitated tobacco use by members of the Armed Forces in that—

(1) from the time of the Civil War until 1956, the Army was required by law “to cause tobacco to be furnished to the enlisted men of the army at cost prices, exclusive of the cost of transportation, in such quantities as they may require, not exceeding sixteen ounces per month” with the cost deducted from their pay;

(2) the Air Force is still required by law to make tobacco available for sale to enlisted members;

(3) cigarettes have been distributed free of charge to members of the Armed Forces as part of the food and sundries packets referred to as “C-rations”;

(4) tobacco products have been and continue to be sold by military exchanges at substantially discounted rates, thus actively encouraging tobacco usage by military personnel, and as late as 1996 commissary tobacco prices were as much as 76 percent lower than commercial retail prices;

(5) the military culture historically has recognized, encouraged, and supported cigarette smoking by servicemembers (“Smoke ’em if you’ve got ’em.”);

(6) a significant number of veterans were non-smokers upon entering military service and began smoking during military service, and reliable studies indicate that 75 percent of World War II veterans began smoking tobacco products as young adults during the course of their military service;

(7) labeling requirements warning of the addictive nature of nicotine and the dangers of tobacco-related products, which were applicable to tobacco products sold in the commercial market, were not mandated for products distributed through the military system until 1970, five years after the requirement was applied to products sold in the civilian market; and

(8) the Department of Veterans Affairs has been authorized by law to provide tobacco to veterans receiving hospital or domiciliary care since 1957 and was authorized to do so by regulation since at least 1933;

Whereas the President has made it a major public health priority to promote increased public awareness of the dan-

gers of tobacco usage and to regard nicotine and its delivery device (cigarettes) as a drug subject to regulation by the Food and Drug Administration;

Whereas the Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that the Veterans Health Administration presently spends more than \$4,000,000,000 per year providing health care to veterans suffering from tobacco-related illnesses; and

Whereas the President's budget for fiscal year 1999 assumes the United States will receive \$65,500,000,000 from tobacco settlement proceeds, but does not set aside any of those proceeds for the tobacco-related expenses of the Department of Veterans Affairs: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
 2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of the Congress that sub-
 3 stantial amounts of the proceeds received by the United
 4 States under any congressionally approved tobacco settle-
 5 ment should be allocated to the Department of Veterans
 6 Affairs.

○